

# **Delaware State Police News Release**

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## **Investigation under way in Escape from Howard R. Young Correctional Institution**

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**Wilmington-** The investigation into the unaccounted inmate from the Howard Young Correctional Institution (HRYCI) is now an on-going investigation between the Delaware State Police and the Delaware Department of Correction.

Troopers were called to the prison at approximately 5:00 p.m. for the report of a subject who was unaccounted for. This person was identified as Joseph Sanders, 42, with a last known address of Bennett Street in Wilmington. Joseph Sanders was last accounted for in the Booking and Receiving area at approximately 2:30 p.m. Shortly thereafter, during a routine check of inmates in the facility, it was discovered he was unaccounted for. At that time escape precautionary measures were implemented. This included an institutional lockdown, an intensive search inside the facility and on grounds, as well as activation of the Correctional Emergency Response Team (CERT). Additionally, the external alarm was sounded at 5:21 p.m. to notify the community a prisoner's location was unknown.

While prison officials were conducting exhaustive searches of the facility, State and Wilmington Police established a perimeter and began conducting roving patrol of the area surrounding HRYCI to check for Sanders. State Police issued a reverse 911 call within a two mile perimeter of the prison to area residents. Additionally, the State Police and DOC Command Post was summonsed to the scene and investigative measures were initiated.

At approximately 9:30 p.m., prison officials determined Sanders was not in the facility. Preliminary indications are that Sanders took an opportunity to leave the prison with a group of inmates who were scheduled to be released from the Booking and Receiving area. This error in release procedure, which occurred because internal checks and balances were not followed by staff, was identified through a research of documents and log books of the facility. This helped authorities reach the conclusion that Sanders was in fact off of HRYCI property.

State Police and DOC staff will continue roving patrols and the search for Sanders has extended beyond the City of Wilmington limits as Sanders has associates all throughout Delaware.

Anyone with information pertaining to Joseph Saunders' whereabouts is asked to call 911, Troop 1 at 302-761-6677 or Crime Stoppers at 1.800.TIP.3333. On line tip submissions can be made via <http://dsp.delaware.gov/crimstop.htm>.